

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00349 140801Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02
MCT-01 H-01 INR-10 PM-05 NSC-05 DODE-00 CIAE-00
A-01 OPR-02 /088 W
-----097832 141037Z /23S

R 131515Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 752
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA
USMISSION USUN NY
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
CINCPAC
/CINCPACFLT
COMIDEASTFOR
USS DAVIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 349

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINS, ASEC, DJ
SUBJ: MALAISE GROWS IN DJIBOUTI

REF: DJIBOUTI 299 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. HEAVY NIGHT-TIME SECURITY MEASURES INVOLVING
SEARCHES OF VEHICLES AND PASSENGERS HAVE AGAIN MADE THEIR
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APPEARANCE IN DJIBOUTI. DJIBOUTI LEADERS MAINTAIN THAT THESE
ACTIVITIES ARE ROUTINE, BUT THEY ARE PROBABLY RELATED TO THE
PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO VISIT CERTAIN COUNTRIES ON THE ARABIAN
PENINSULA. SOME TRACTS HAVE BEGUN TO SHOW UP, CALLING FOR
REJECTION OF BOTH PRESIDENT HASSAN GOULED AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER
AHMED DINI. DEMONSTRATIONS AND COUNTER-DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE ALSO
TAKEN PLACE RECENTLY, INDICATING CONSIDERABLE EFFERVESECE IN

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

2. ON MARCH 6, POLICE WERE CALLED OUT TO ROUND UP A NUMBER OF TRACTS APPEARING IN VARIOUS LOCAL TOWNSHIPS. THESE ONE-PAGE TRACTS, ONE OF WHICH WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY, APPEAR PRIMARILY DIRECTED AGAINST THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN DJIBOUTI AND THOSE PEOPLE ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM BEING IN DJIBOUTI. THE TRACTS ARE UNSIGNED, DO NOT INDICATE WHICH PARTY IS FAVORED, AND GENERALLY LOOK LIKE A FAIRLY AMATEURISH EFFORT TO DRUM UP SOME EXCITEMENT. DJIBOUTI MINISTER OF INTERIOR MOUMIN BAHDON DOES NOT RELISH THIS KIND OF AMUSEMENT, AND HIS MEN ARE QUITE EFFICIENT ROUNDING UP ANYTHING THAT LOOKS LIKE ANTI-GOVERNMENT LITERATURE. NO ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

3. ON THURSDAY, MARCH 9, A QUIET DEMONSTRATION WAS HELD IN THE ARHIBA TOWNSHIP OF DJIBOUTI, A SECTION OF TOWN INHABITED EXCLUSIVELY BY MEMBERS OF THE AFAR ETHNIC GROUP. THE DEMONSTRATION WAS TO CELEBRATE THE FALL OF JIJIGA TO ETHIOPIAN TROOPS. THE ORGANIZERS OF THAT SPECTACLE ARE UNKNOWN TO THIS EMBASSY, BUT THERE IS PROBABLY SOME DIRECT TIE TO BE FOUND TO THE ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY.

4. THE FOLLOWING EVENING, A LARGE COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION WAS ORGANIZED, REPORTEDLY BY THE SOMALI EMBASSY, TO PROTEST THE AFAR DEMONSTRATION OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT. POLICE WERE CALLED IN TO QUELL THE DISTURBANCES AND TO RESCUE SEVERAL ETHIOPIAN
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RESIDENTS. PARTICIPANTS ALLEGEDLY WERE ONLY THOSE OF SOMALI GROUPS NATIVE TO THE HARGEISA REGION AND SURROUNDING AREAS (GADABOURSI AND ISSAK), WITH FEW, IF ANY, ISSAS TAKING PART. SOME ARRESTS WERE MADE.

5. MINISTER OF INTERIOR MOUMIN BAHDON EXPLAINED TO CHARGE ON 12 MARCH THAT HE IS TAKING STRONG MEASURES TO PREVENT DISTURBANCES RELATED TO THE SOMSRI DEFEAT IN THE OGADEN. THE ALLEGED LACK OF INTEREST IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS AMONG THE ISSAS INDICATES A PRONOUNCED NEW TILT IN FAVOR OF THE VICTORIOUS ETHIOPIANS AND A DESIRE TO DISENTANGLE THEMSELVES FROM ACTIVITIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA. AS SUCH, THESE ARE PROBABLY A FAIRLY HELATHY SIGN THAT THE END OF THE OGADEN WAR IS BRINGING SOME NEEDED REALISM TO THE LOCAL POPULATION.
CLARKE

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NNN

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